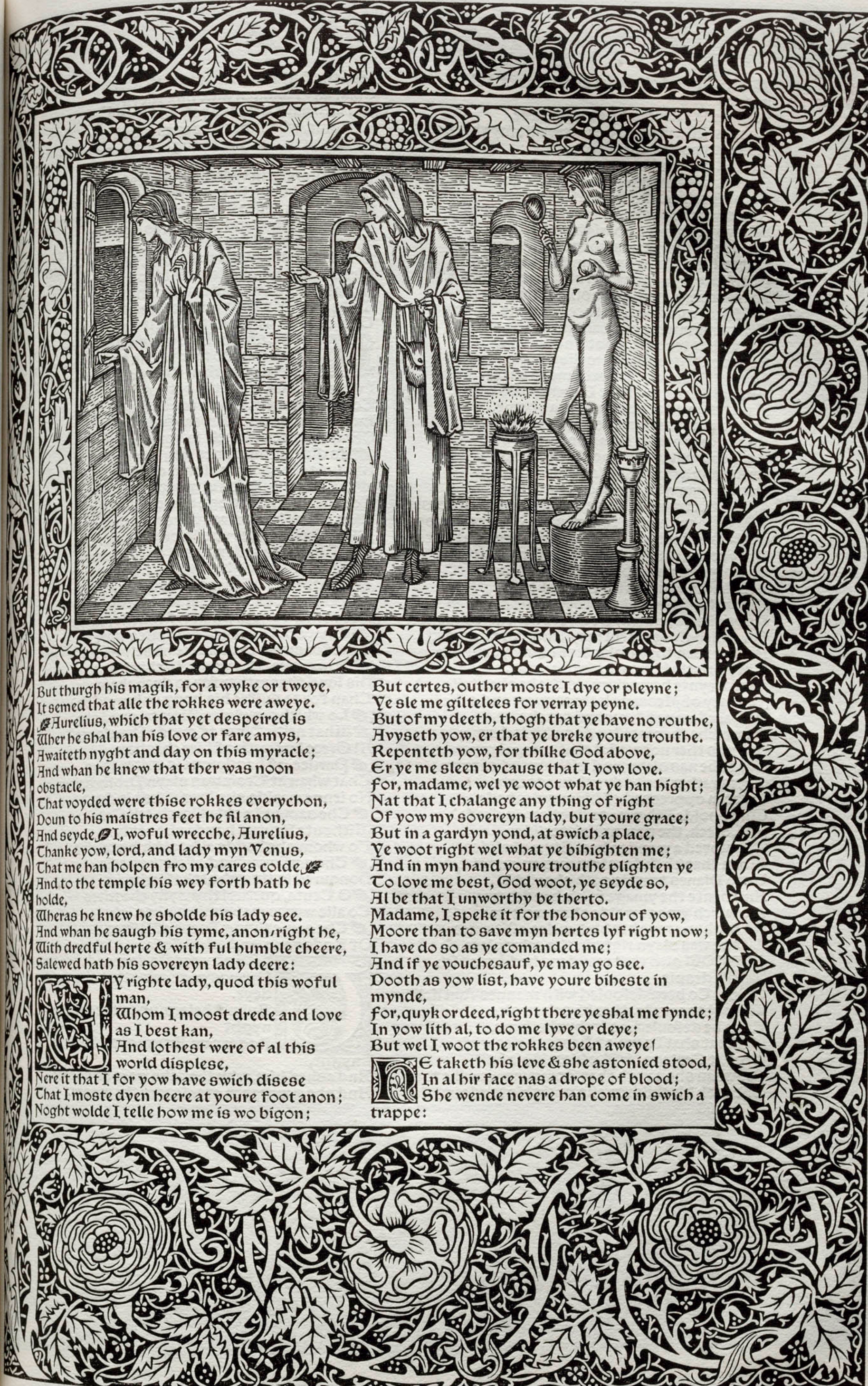


And after that he seyde a wonder thyng:
I knowe, quod he, the cause of youre comyng.
And er they ferther any foote wente,
He tolde hem al that was in hire entente.
This Briton clerk hym asked of felawes
The whiche that he had knowe in olde dawes;
And he answerde hym that they dede were,
for which he weep ful ofte many a teere.
Doun of his hors Aurelius lighte anon,
And forth with this magicien is he gon
hoom to his hous, and made hem wel at ese.
Hem lakked no vitaille that myghte hem plesse;
So wel arrayed hous as ther was oon
Aurelius in his lyf saugh nevere noon.
He shewed hym, er he wente to sopeer,
forestes, parkes ful of wilde deer;
Ther saugh he hertes with hir hornes hye,
The gretteste that evere were seyn with eye.
He saugh of hem an hondred slayn with houndes,
And somme with arwes blede of bittre woundes.
Thise fauconers upon a fair ryver,
That with hir haukes han the heroun slayn.
Tho saugh he knyghtes justyng in a playn;
And after this, he dide hym swich plesaunce,
That he hym shewed his lady on a daunce,
On which hymself he daunced, as hym thoughte.
And whan this maister, that this magyk wroughte,
Saugh it was tyme, he clapte his handes two,
And, farewell! al oure revel was ago.
And yet remoeved they nevere out of the hous,
Whil they saugh al this sighte merveillous,
But in his studie, theas his bookes be,
They seten stille, and no wight but they thre.
O hym this maister called his squier,
And seyde hym thus: Is redy oure soper?
Almoost an houre it is, I undertake,
Sith I yow bad oure soper for to make,
Whan that thise worthy men wenten with me
Into my studie, theas my bookes be.
Sire, quod this squier, whan it liketh yow,
It is al redy, though ye wol right now.
Go we thanne soupe, quod he, as for the beste;
This amorous folk som tyme moote han hir reste.
After soper fille they in trettee
What somme sholde this maistres
guerdon be,
To remoeven alle the rokkes of Britayne,
And eek from Gerounde to the mouth of Sayne.
He made it straunge, and swoor, so God hym
save!
Lasse than a thousand pound he wolde nat have,
Ne gladly for that somme he wolde nat goon.
Aurelius, with blisful herte anon,
Answerde thus: fy on a thousand pound!
This wyde world, which that men seye is
round,
I wolde it yewe, if I were lord of it!
This bargayn is ful dryve, for we been knyht.
Ye shal be payed trewely, by my trouthe!
But looketh now, for no negligence or slouth,
Ye tarie us heere no lenger than tomorwe.
Nay, quod this clerk, have heer my feith to borwe.

So bedde is goon Aurelius whan hym leste,
And wel ny al that nyght he hadde his reste.
What for his labour and his hope of blisse,
His woful herte of penaunce hadde a lisse.
Upon the morwe, whan that it was day,
To Britaigne toke they the righte way,
Aurelius, and this magicien bisyde;
And been descended ther they wolde abyde;
And this was, as thise bookes me remembre,
The colde frosty sesoun of Decembre.
Ther was a wex old, and hewed lyh
latoun,
That in his hoot declynacioun
Shoon as the burned gold with
stremes brighte;
But now in Capricorn adoun he
lighte,
Wheras he shoon ful pale, I dar wel scyn.
The bittre frostes, with the sleet and reyn,
Destroyed hath the grene in every yerd.
Janus sit by the fyr, with double berd,
And drynketh of his bugle horn the wyn.
Biforn hym stant brawn of the tusked swyn,
And Nowel crieth every lusty man.
Aurelius, in al that evere he kan,
Dooth to his maister chiere and reverence,
And preyeth hym to doon his diligence
To bryngen hym out of his peynes smerte,
Or with a sword that he wolde slitte his herte.
This subtil clerk swich routhe had of this man,
That nyght and day he spedde hym that he kan,
To wayten a tyme of his conclusioun;
This is to seye, to maken illuscioun,
By swich an apparence or jogelrye,
I ne kan no termes of astrologye,
That she and every wight sholde wene and seye,
That of Britaigne the rokkes were aweye,
Or ellis they were sonken under grounde,
So atte laste he hath his tyme yfounde
To maken his japes and his wrecchednesse
Of swich a superstitious cursednesse.
His tables Tolletanes forth he brought,
ful wel corrected, ne ther lakked nought,
Neither his collect, ne his expans yecris,
Ne his rootes, ne his othere geeris,
As been his centris and his arguments,
And his proporcionels convenientis
for his equacions in every thyng.
And, by his eighte speere in his wirkyng,
He knew ful wel how fer Alnath was shoue
fro the heed of thilke fixe Aries above,
That in the ninthe speere considered is;
ful subtilly he kalkuled al this.
Whan he hadde founde his firstemansioun,
He knew the remenaunt by proporcioun;
And knew the arisyng of his moone weel,
And in whos face, and terme, and everydeel;
And knew ful weel the moones mansioun
Acordaunt to his operacioun;
And knew also his othere observaunces
for swiche illusciouns & swiche meschaunces
As hethen folk useden in thilke dayes;
for which no lenger maketh he delays;



But thurgh his magik, for a wyke or tweye,
It semed that alle the rokkes were aweye.
Aurelius, which that yet despaired is
Wher he shal han his love or fare amys,
Awaiteth nyght and day on this myracle;
And whan he knew that ther was noon
obstacle,
That voyded were thise rokkes everychon,
Doun to his maistres feet he fil anon,
And seyde: I, woful wrecche, Aurelius,
Chanke yow, lord, and lady myn Venus,
That me han holpen fro my cares colde,
And to the temple his wey forth hath he
holde,
Wheras he knew he sholde his lady see.
And whan he saugh his tyme, anon right he,
With dredful herte & with ful humble cheere,
Salwed bath his sovereyn lady deere:
Righte lady, quod this woful
man,
Whom I moost drede and love
as I best kan,
And lothest were of al this
world displese,
Nere it that I for yow have swich disease
That I moost dyen heere at youre foot anon;
Noght wolde I telle how me is wo bigon;

But certes, outhere moste I dye or pleyne;
Ye sle me gilletees for verray peyne.
But of my deeth, though that ye have no routhe,
Hyveth yow, er that ye breke youre trouthe.
Repenteth yow, for thilke God above,
Er ye me sleen bycause that I yow love,
for, madame, wel ye woot what ye han bight;
Nat that I chalange any thing of right
Of yow my sovereyn lady, but youre grace;
But in a gardyn yond, at swich a place,
Ye woot right wel what ye bihighten me;
And in myn hand youre trouthe pligheten ye
To love me best, God woot, ye seyde so,
Al be that I unworthy be therto.
Madame, I speke it for the honour of yow,
Moore than to save myn hertes lyf right now;
I have do so as ye comanded me;
And if ye vouchesauf, ye may go see.
Dooth as yow list, have youre biheste in
mynde,
for, quyk or deed, right there ye shal me fynde;
In yow lith al, to do me lyve or deye;
But wel I woot the rokkes been aweye!
E taketh his leve & she astonied stood,
In al hir face nas a drope of blood;
She wende nevere han come in swich a
trappe;